

Interested in Partnering with the State on the Federal PreK Expansion Grant?

Building on the success of last year's \$39.6M Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant from the federal Departments of Education (DOE) and Health and Human Services (HHS), the Vermont Governor's Office plans to apply for the new federal Preschool Development Grants-Expansion Grant (PDG-Expansion).

The purpose of PDG-Expansion is to “to support state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand high-quality preschool programs so that more children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.” Up to \$10M may be available each year for four years. The proposal is **due October 14, 2014**.

Opportunity Overview

PDG-Expansion targets services to **four-year-old children at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level**. At least 95% of funds received will be passed through to subgrantees to use to implement and sustain voluntary, high quality preschool programs for eligible children. These services can be provided directly to school districts and/or through other groups. All school districts in Vermont are eligible to participate.

The grant focuses on the delivery of “high-quality preschool programs” and the expansion of services through the creation of “new slots” for eligible children.

The PDG-Expansion application defines “High-quality preschool programs” as “an early learning program that includes structural elements that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality” (see requirements below). “New slots” refers to actual new slots in programs for the targeted population or upgrades to existing slots including but not limited to increasing participation from half-day to full-day (i.e., 5 or more hours per day).

To be a partner, programs will need to commit to achieving quality standards that exceed those Vermont currently requires through Acts 62 and 166. These include providing:

- Services that meet Vermont prekindergarten program standards
- Teachers and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials
- Instructional staff salaries comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff
- High quality professional staff development;
- A full-day program
- Inclusion of children with disabilities
- Developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate evidence-based curricula aligned with the Vermont Early Learning Standards
- Individualized accommodations and supports

- Learning environments aligned with the Vermont Early Learning Standards
- Evidence-based health and safety standards
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement
- On-site or accessible comprehensive services for children to support children's learning and development including:
 - Screenings for hearing, vision, dental, health (including mental health) and development, as well as appropriate referrals;
 - Responsive family engagement opportunities;
 - Nutrition services;
 - Coordinated IDEA, Part B, Section 619 services;
 - Physical activity services; and
 - Identify additional community and support services as appropriate (such as income supports, food pantries, housing, and social services).

Application Overview

A cross-agency team is preparing the PDG-Expansion Grant application. This includes senior staff from Vermont's Governor's Office, Agency of Education, Agency of Human Services, and Building Bright Futures, among others.

Requirements for participation by the LEAs in the grant application process are minimal. During the month of September 2014, LEAs will be required to:

- Provide basic data and documents to be determined by the state, such as projected numbers of eligible children in the school district who will participate; and
- Sign a preliminary MOU with the state.

Deadline

To express interest in partnering or for more information, please contact Manuela Fonseca at the Agency of Education (Manuela.Fonseca@state.vt.us)

Please reach out to Manuela if you are interested in learning more about this opportunity to partner on this grant by **Friday, September 19th**.

For More Information

Please visit the official website for the grant opportunity:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>